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DECEMBER MEETING.

The next Ordinary Monthly Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, December 16th**, at Headquarters (No. 2 Room), St. Bride Institute, Bride Lane, E.C., when Mr. L. Stanley Jast, Chief Librarian, Croydon Public Libraries, will address the members on "**Committee Work.**"

Mr. Jast will deal with the delegation of powers; the librarian as secretary; committee procedure; the librarian and his chairman; sub-committees; the librarian's book list; various local practices; and so on. Mr. R. F. Bullen is down to open the discussion, and as an outline of Mr. Jast's address is given here, it is hoped that many assistants will take the opportunity of speaking on one or other of the points raised. The subject, by the way, has never yet been dealt with before this Association.

The room will be open at 7.30 p.m.; the meeting will commence at 8 p.m.

Visitors (especially library assistants) are welcome.

NORTH-WESTERN BRANCH.

NOVEMBER MEETING.

By kind invitation of Mr. Ben H. Mullen, M.A., Chief Librarian and Curator, the meeting was held in Salford. The members first met at the Irlams o' th' Heights Branch Library, where they were received by Mr. Mullen and Mr. Hargreaves, the Librarian, under whose guidance an inspection of the Library and Public Hall was made.

The Library is a model branch library; architecture, arrangement and fittings make a satisfactory combination, and there is an air of comfort and an absence of stiffness and formality that must be appreciated by those who use the place. It was a pleasure to learn that the figures for 1902-3 show the issue of fiction to have decreased, while that of all other classes has practically doubled, save biography, which, however, has a good percentage. These satisfactory results are attributed to University Extension Lectures and careful selection of books. The Librarian makes a special point of topical lists, and all new books are exhibited and can be examined for a short time before being put into circulation.

From Th' Heights the members went by electric car to the

Central Library and Museum at Peel Park, where the meeting proper was held, Mr. Mullen being in the chair. He extended a hearty welcome on behalf of the Libraries Committee, himself and the staff, to the members of the N.W. Branch of the L.A.A.

The address of Mr. J. K. Hosmer, President of the American Library Association, delivered at the Niagara Falls Conference in this year, was read by Mr. Swann. It dealt with "Some things that are uppermost," and touched in an interesting manner upon "dead" books, fiction, and the ideal librarian. It will be found in the July number of the "American Library Journal."

A short discussion followed, to which Mr. Mullen contributed some helpful words, in particular advising the wise use of occasional snatches of spare time and pointing out the necessity for making determined efforts to overcome difficulties and not shirking them.

Hearty votes of thanks to the Libraries' Committee, to Mr. Mullen and his staff, were passed unanimously. Before leaving, the members were entertained to light refreshments.

DECEMBER MEETING.

The next meeting is fixed for Tuesday, December 8th, at 8 p.m. This should be the Annual Meeting, but, owing to a proposal to hold this in June, the Committee have to discuss the question, after which they will notify members *re* December meeting.

MEETING AT THE PATENT OFFICE.

At this meeting some fifty members and friends were present, Mr. Rees occupying the chair. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed, after which five vacancies on the committee were dealt with. There being no other nominations, Messrs. Coltman (Woolwich), Green (Shoreditch), Hawkins (Fulham), McDouall (Hammersmith), and Smith (Bishopsgate), were elected. Mr. Hulme then read his paper, which, together with the discussion, appears on another page herein. Mr. Chambers, seconded by Mr. Thorne, moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Hulme for his excellent address and hospitality, to which Mr. Hulme suitably responded. A vote of thanks to the Comptroller for his kind permission in allowing the meeting was passed on the motion of Mr. Harris, seconded by Mr. Savage. This finished, the party proceeded in small companies, attended by Mr. Hulme and his staff, to view the Library.

This immense and interesting place, 138 feet long, has two galleries, there being to the shelves on both, as with ground floor, open access. The book stacks, which are Lambert's Adjustable, surround the galleries and the ground floor, the middle of the floor

containing cases in which periodicals are kept in boxes, and at the end of each case small guides or catalogues may be found. There is a circular desk for the use of the staff, and a barrier further on; all the stacks beyond this on the ground floor are kept for British patents, which date from about 1657. The galleries have each a division in which patents of other countries are kept, viz., United States, Canada, Cape Colony, Switzerland, Germany and Japan, etc. As one might expect, the Japanese patents are often amusing. On the right gallery at the north end there is a special collection of German patents. There was also an exhibition of rare books and old specifications, including facsimiles of Caxton's works; autograph letters of Dr. S. Johnson; and an old book of patents printed upon linen, its contents being mainly drawings of steam engines, traction engines, and flying machines of great variety, one patent being that of training birds to take flight whilst fastened to a carriage with a driver seated upon it. There were several specimens of the leather used for binding, together with examples of the styles of binding; these, with other items, proved of great interest to all who viewed them. Those of the party who in passing round noticed anything of special interest now made further investigations, but the time having drawn on the party dispersed, after a most enjoyable and highly interesting evening.

D. J. B.

CLASSIFICATION IN THE PATENT OFFICE LIBRARY.

By E. WYNDHAM HULME.

Classification in the Patent Office Library is essentially in a transition stage. That of the Periodical collection which occupies the first and second galleries is perhaps in the most advanced stage: here, at least, we have a detailed division of subject-matter, with a chronological arrangement of the units and relative class marks. For the text books on the ground floor we still retain the old system of fixed marks, but in the course of the next few years we shall have formulated a new scheme based upon certain principles which I shall explain to you to-night.

No general subject catalogue of the library has been published since 1883, but the materials for a new edition are rapidly approaching completion, and already ten sectional catalogues have been issued which represent about one half of the future subject catalogue. However, it is not about ourselves and our doings that I am going to speak. Rather I wish to introduce you to some hard thinking about the principles of classification which are of universal application, and which can and should be discussed quite apart from the results obtained by their adoption in a particular establishment.

I must also warn you that the views I am about to express are not those which you will find in your text books, and may be opposed to those which you will hear in your lecture rooms. I want you, therefore, to accept nothing, but to reserve your judgment upon all points until you have had an opportunity of consulting others upon the subject.

Book classification consists of three operations:

- I. Definition, or the formulation of class headings.

II. Co-ordination, or the assertion of some order between the classes.

III. Notation, which may be described as a shorthand system of symbolising classes without reciting their definition and relative position in the classification.

It is with the two former operations alone that I propose to deal.

NATURE OF CLASSES.

The subject of definition belongs to Logic, and Logic forms no part of your prescribed course of study. Hence the subject of definition and of the nature of classes is excluded, I believe, entirely from your text books. These plunge you into the deep waters of classification before you have been initiated into the mysteries of language which is the instrument by which classes are perpetuated. Classes are created by thinking, by observing resemblances, and are perpetuated by definition, or class names. From the librarian's standpoint, definitions, class names, class headings, are interchangeable terms. A class consists of the number of objects composing the class just as a company consists of the number of its members. The test of membership of a class is the possession by the individual member of the attributes common to the class and formulated in the class heading. Class names and individual names are opposite terms. Let us see if we can at once pick out these elements in our library catalogues.

CLASS ELEMENTS IN LIBRARY CATALOGUES.

The Author Catalogue, for instance, is a class catalogue, although the fact is to some extent concealed by the elliptical nature of its headings. Thus the heading, "William Shakespeare," although at first sight merely descriptive of an individual, is in reality, when expanded, the class heading, "Shakespeare's Works," and all the items assembled thereunder, are there in virtue of their being works by or attributed to Shakespeare. Form headings, such as Encyclopædias, Periodicals, etc., and all subject headings are class headings. Indeed, with the exception of the first-word entries of anonymous works which are the names or part of the names of individual works, the whole of cataloguing is grouping works under class headings, and the difference between catalogue systems is a difference between the order of the classes. It is evident, therefore, that to call that type of catalogue which disposes of its classes in class order a class catalogue, and to refuse that title to other types of catalogue, is a serious blunder. The distinction should be between class order and alphabetical class catalogues.

Now let us consider more closely the essential differences between the alphabetical and class order subject catalogues.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE SUBJECT CATALOGUE.

The first rule of definition and the only one with which I will trouble you is that the class heading or definition must be clear and unequivocal. An equivocal heading is one which can be used in two or more senses, and denotes, therefore, two or more classes. Most words in the English language are equivocal; hence the difficulty of correct definition is considerable. For instance, if writers on chemistry have at different periods used this term to denote (i.) the art of transmuting metals, (ii.) the art of preparing chemical medicines, (iii.) chemistry in its modern sense, then a catalogue which does not differentiate between these classes is to that extent guilty of equivocal definition. This difficulty of accurate definition is of course common to both types of Subject Catalogue.

Now in the old Title Catalogue works were grouped under the catchwords of their titles arranged alphabetically. The effect of this was to bring together works of an extremely dissimilar character, e.g., Canal Locks and Locks and Keys, and to separate works on the same subject,

e.g., Naval Architecture and Shipbuilding, or Physics and Natural Philosophy. Here the classes may be called Philological or Dictionary classes, because they brought together works upon the same subject only in so far as they were called by a common title.

Some advance upon this primitive system of classification was effected by the Dictionary Cataloguers of America, who published a standard list of Subject Headings. For several reasons the result was not satisfactory. The headings were for the most part derived from catalogues already out of date, and if the obvious blunders were corrected still there was no systematic revision of the class definitions—hence the attempt to bind these loosely defined headings together by means of cross references resulted merely in the scheduling of all headings which might or might not have some bearing upon the subject.

Opposed to the methods of the Dictionary Cataloguers came the Class-Order Cataloguers, who began with formulating a list of the great families of literature and proceeded to divide these families into subordinate groups. And with the class-order catalogue commenced the never ending discussion of the relative merits of the Class versus Dictionary Subject Catalogues.

THE TEST OF EFFICIENCY.

Now what I want to point out to you is this. Both types of catalogues are class catalogues, and the criterion of efficiency of the Subject Class Catalogue is primarily a question of the extent and quality of their class definitions. It has, I know, been said that the dictionary subject catalogue will be more "specific" than the class order catalogue, i.e., that its classification will be more extended, there will be more classes; but there is no ground for the assertion, for both systems are indefinitely extensible. Again, as the methods of the class-order catalogue are admittedly sound, it may be thought that it is reasonable to found a probable argument in favour of the superiority of his definitions. But the best dictionary subject cataloguers have probably used the same methods although they may not have published a class list of their headings, and if so, what is the value of your reasoning?

ORDER OF CLASSES NOT MATERIAL.

In the subject lists before you, you will observe that the general alphabet of headings is merely a class list broken up and distributed alphabetically. It is definition, therefore, not order, which imparts value to a classification. It is definition, not the order of definitions, which determines the composition of a class. A class does not cease to be a class because it is ranged in an alphabetical order. The difference between the two systems is one of form rather than of substance. Between individual instances comparisons may be instituted and conclusions drawn. But you really have no sufficient data for generalising from the comparison of rival types. The merits of a particular catalogue have little or no relation to the order in which its classes are presented. The whole controversy rests upon a radical misconception of the nature of classes; and this misconception has been fostered by a slovenly terminology, which has helped to conceal from us the fact that the mechanism of the alphabetical and class-order subject catalogue is in fact interchangeable.

THE PRINCIPLES OF CO-ORDINATION.

Now, having acquired a clear idea of the nature of classes in the various types of subject catalogues, we may turn to the general question of book classification and the co-ordination of classes. What, for instance, is the specific advantage of finding works on the same subject grouped together upon the shelves? The answer is obvious. The class catalogue economises the labour of selecting works to be consulted; the shelf classification economises distances to be travelled. Economy of eyes and legs, therefore, is the real justification of book classification. Let us agree to call this

convenience of reference. The question then arises, in what order are these groups to be arranged? The text-books say in the order of likeness. But points of similarity are so numerous that the answer doesn't help us much, and practical experience at once affords a much better solution. When a reader has exhausted the works found together under a given heading, if he is still desirous of prosecuting his search he will naturally require *more of the same subject matter*, and convenience of reference will be best secured if classes of works containing the same subject matter are to be found in the class list, and on the shelves *grouped in the order of their common subject matter*.

THE LIMITS OF CO-ORDINATION.

Now if our definitions have been framed so as to indicate accurately the scope and composition of our classes, their grouping by reference to this principle of common subject matter will not be a matter of great difficulty. But we should soon come to a point where this clue to co-ordination is wholly lost. Literature would appear to consist of groups of varying size—the large groups with many sub-divisions, the smaller ones with few or none at all. Apart from the general relation in which these groups stand to the General Reference Class, *i.e.*, the Encyclopædias, the Encyclopædic Dictionaries and so forth, we find ourselves face to face with a host of classes which may be regarded as independent units, but which must be marshalled in some sort of decent order, though it is clear that this final order will not further our original object, *viz.*:—convenience of reference. Probably a conventional order will be adopted—the order can be varied to suit local requirements—the ultimate order of your classes is really not a matter of great moment.

Thus we have come to regard literary classification as an amalgamation of many independent classifications which are given an appearance of unity owing to the uniform progression of the notation symbols. And that this really is the case will be seen by opening your classification systems at any place and enquiring what amount of common subject matter is there between any two given classes placed in juxtaposition—let us say—

- 779 Collection of Photographs.
- (780 Music.
- (789 .. Percussion Instruments.
- 790 Amusements.

This suggests food for reflection. For if our analysis is correct, what is the value of the numerous classifications set out in your text-books, which deal almost entirely with the order of the main groups of literature, the co-ordination of which we have described as being of little practical moment. Would it not be better for you to limit your studies to systems which have been applied on a large scale to book classification, the bibliographical schemes of Brunet and Lorenz, or the library schemes of Brown, Cutter and Dewey.

THE UNIT OF THE SUB-DIVISION OF SUBJECT MATTER.

But now I must ask you to go back to our starting point, for when laying down rules for definition we have omitted to define what is to be the unit of our classification—in other words, how far it is profitable to push the division of subject matter on the shelves, or in the subject catalogue. The Logicians tell you frankly that there is no real limit to the sub-division of subject matter. Let us see how the problem is solved by librarians.

The alphabetical class cataloguer would say, "I class a work according to my lights: if the work is a good work I am inclined to repeat it under several headings, if not, one entry would suffice," and he would scout the idea of being bound by any formula. The class order catalogue

would refer you to his system ; if you don't like it you are advised to go elsewhere. Obviously both systems of registering subject matter are arbitrary and unscientific. But for librarians desirous of securing a co-operative and uniform basis for subject registration there is a way out of the difficulty. For if, as the Logicians tell us, you cannot base your unit of classification upon the nature of subject matter you must seek your unit in literature itself. In other words your unit must be based upon bibliographical considerations, viz. : the series, the work, the volume, the chapter or the paragraph.

Now obviously there is a strong *prima facie* case for accepting the work as the unit of our classification. The others are hardly worth discussion. The principle suggested is that literature should supply its own definitions, and that those definitions should be exactly descriptive of the area of individual works registered thereunder. In previous communications to the "Library Record" I have called registration of subject matter by this rule "specific entry," but I should now like to substitute the phrase "equal entry," because this would at once suggest to you that the meaning of the rule is that your definition should coincide as nearly as possible with the area of the works they are intended to enclose, and that registration should be the entry of works under headings of an equal definition. Let us try and picture to ourselves how this would work out in practice. Thus there would be an exact agreement between the scope of headings and works registered thereunder, and all works registered under a heading would be of equal scope, because things equal to the same thing are equal to one another. Turn to Mr. Dewey's Catalogue of Accessions, Class 672, you will find under that heading of Iron and Steel Manufactures three works :

- i. A Directory of the American Iron Trade.
- ii. A work on Architectural Ironwork.
- iii. A work on the influence of temperature on the mechanical properties of iron.

Our system would require a triple division of this heading, viz. :—

- Iron Trades (Directories).
- Iron and Steel Construction.
- Iron and Steel, Mechanical Properties.

Understand, please, I am not criticizing Mr. Dewey. I only want to illustrate the working of the proposed rule by means of comparison. In other cases the sub-division of subject matter would be less extended than in Dewey. Take for instance the subjects of Soap and Candles, or Perfumery and Cosmetics where there is a constant association of the two subjects in literature we should make two double-barrelled headings :

- Soap and Candles.
- Perfumery and Cosmetics.

—Here Mr. Dewey divides and we collect. Mr. Dewey requires two entries, we require one. Mr. Dewey separates in his class list that which literature has joined together, hence the shelf efficiency of the Dewey arrangement suffers when a work which can only be allotted in one place required double allotment. This must occur whenever the divisions of a particular system do not coincide with the division of subject matter in literature.

I do not propose to deal with the various modifications of the rule of equal (or specific) definition which have been suggested to me in practice. You will find it all set out in the Record for July, 1902. If you prefer example to precept, I suggest that those of you who are interested in the subject should accept as a free gift from the Library one of the subject lists before you, so that you can study the application of the rule at your leisure. The latest subject list, that on the "Mineral Industries," has

this advantage over those previously published. It contains in square brackets at the end of each class-heading a reference to the pages where that heading is to be found arranged in its natural order.

BENEFIT OF UNIFORMITY OF REGISTRATION.

As to the advantages which would accrue from the establishment of a co-operative basis for subject registration I shall say nothing.

Uniformity of registration of the principal entry has long been secured in the Author and Title Catalogue by the influence of the national codes of catalogue rules. The registration of subject matter on uniform lines will be an infinitely simpler matter; but some pioneer work still remains to be done before librarians will recognise its practicability.

ULTIMATE ORDER OF UNITS IN A CLASS.

Now for a final word as to the order in which books in a given class should stand upon the shelves and the order of entries under a class heading.

I believe that the almost universal practice is to range works in the alphabet of their authors' names. The ultimate order is alphabetical; The ultimate order of your classification, therefore, is artificial and unscientific. Opposed to this order is the evolutionary, the historical or chronological order. The advantages are sufficiently obvious. The latest works are at the end of the list, the earliest at the beginning. But chronological order does more than this. Books to the left of a work are books from which the work in question is derived—books to the right are works upon which it has exercised its influence. For the study of a work from the point of view of its sources, its authorship or its influence, you must be able to see it in its true historical position. In the final classification of our library chronological order will be adopted on the shelf and in the class list. You might, of course, adopt chronological order in the class list and alphabetical order on the shelves. There is no novelty in the suggestion, but I believe that this library will be the first to carry it into effect on an extended scale. For shelf classification there is an additional argument in its favour. When consideration of space becomes urgent it is customary to remove classes from their relative order to some other part of the building. You cannot split a class which is arranged alphabetically, it must be moved *en bloc*, but there may be a distinct advantage in dividing your collection in such a way that works prior to a certain date will form a parallel collection in another part of the building. Old law books, early treatises on the arts and sciences are only required for historical investigations, unnecessary wear and tear of works which cannot be readily replaced is avoided, while the modern collection is rendered more accessible and easy of reference. If the date mark is printed legibly on the tail-piece, the work ranges itself as soon as the class mark has been added.

In the brief discussion that followed Mr. ERNEST A. SAVAGE said most of the members present would agree that the paper they had heard that evening was one of the best and most interesting that had been read before them for some time. Mainly it dealt with the principles of classification, but with those principles as applied to the classification of books in the Patent Office Library. He had listened with attention to what Mr. Hulme had had to say about the lack of co-relation between adjacent headings in some of the standard classifications; and, as an assistant in an open access library, it had occurred to him more than once that an alphabetical arrangement on the shelves of broad, but well-defined headings, such as Mr. Hulme followed in his catalogue, would perhaps be simpler for the public to understand than an artificial order. It was to be hoped, however, that the public would in the course of time ultimately come to understand systematic classifications.

which were of course better. Regarding the chronological arrangement of books under class headings, while Mr. Hulme's experience would lead him to prefer this in his own library, it seemed quite unsuitable for a general library, where out-of-date scientific works could seldom be preserved when other newer books had superseded them.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Andrew Carnegie is the subject of the cartoon in "Vanity Fair" of 29th October last.

Cork.—Last month Mr. Andrew Carnegie placed in position the memorial stone of a new public library which is in course of erection here, and to which he has contributed £10,000.

Grays (Essex).—The Countess of Warwick opened the new Carnegie Library here on Wednesday, 11th November, at 1.30 p.m. The library is planned for open access, and contains some 3,600 vols., which will in all probability be considerably augmented in the near future. The fittings are of oak, and altogether the building is splendid value for the £3,000 which has been spent on it and likely to be well patronised by the 13,000 residents of Grays. Mr. Silverwood, the chairman of the Library Committee, has worked hard and energetically for some considerable time past to put the Library in a position to command success; the rest depends on the librarian and the inhabitants of Grays. To Mr. Silverwood and Mr. Boatman great credit is due for their enterprise in promoting the "book fund." Altogether about £540 have been collected in the town for new books—a magnificent example which we commend to some of the more wealthy but less enthusiastic London suburbs.

Lambeth.—The Library Committee reported last month that advertisements had been issued inviting architects to submit plans and designs for the proposed Herne Hill Library. The cost of the building is not to exceed £10,000.

Limerick.—Mr. Andrew Carnegie has laid the foundation stone of a new public library for this city, towards the erection of which he has given a sum of £7,000.

Liverpool.—A pleasant social function took place at the Central Library on Friday, the 6th November, on the occasion of Mr. Cowell's jubilee, the completion of fifty years' service. The proceedings were happily commenced by the placing of an ornamental scroll on the wall, inscribed, "Fifty, and not out," which evoked much enthusiasm, bringing rounds of applause. The celebration took the form of a supper given by the Chief Librarian to all the permanent adult officials. Presentations were made, including an address from the staff, printed on vellum by Mr. Donald Fraser, and enclosed in an artistic casket specially designed and executed by Mr. C. E. Thompson,

with suitable inscription. In addition, a jewelled tie-clip was presented, also suitably inscribed. A second address, illuminated by Mr. J. O. Marples, was presented from a number of the "old boys" who have served under Mr. Cowell since he became Chief Librarian 28 years ago. An interesting feature was a letter read from an "old boy," now secretary to an Education Committee in a large and important district near London, describing in felicitous terms his library experiences and the kindness, sympathy, and help he had received from Mr. Cowell.

The presentation arrangements were in the hands of a small committee of the most prominent officials: Messrs. Formby, Deputy Librarian, Curran, Parry and Stephens, the last named representing the Librarians and Assistants of the District Libraries. The lighter features included vocal and instrumental music, and were of the most enjoyable character.

Neath.—The Mayor of Neath (Councillor E. Evans-Bevan) has given £1,000 towards the new public library at Neath. Some months ago the old structure was burnt down, and its contents practically destroyed. The council are building a new library.

Society of Public Librarians.—A meeting was held at the Bishopsgate Institute on Wednesday evening, November 4th, when Mr. Heyner read a paper entitled, "The book and its binding." Mr. Heyner first dealt with the subject historically, and then proceeded to explain the present methods of binding, dealing fully with the question of material and the relative advantages of leather, vellum, pegamoid, etc. He exhibited many valuable specimens of binding by Zahnsdorf, together with some of his own work, which were examined with much interest and greatly admired. A lengthy discussion followed. At the conclusion a hearty vote of thanks was accorded Mr. Heyner for his interesting and instructive paper, and to Mr. Zahnsdorf for his kindness in granting the loan of the specimens.

Stoke Newington.—The foundation stone of the Library Extension Buildings, towards the cost of which Mr. Carnegie has generously given £4,450, was laid by the Mayor of Stoke Newington on October 31st.

The Vatican Library.—The Vatican Library, which has had such a narrow escape from destruction by fire, was founded by Nicholas V., who had made a collection of about 9,000 manuscripts. Various other libraries were afterwards incorporated with it, including that of the Queen Christina of Sweden. It contains, at the present time, about 2,500 manuscripts and about 100,000 books. The famous archives were first opened to students

by Leo XIII., who used often to look in during the afternoon and inquire how their studies were getting on.

Woking.—The District Council at a recent meeting, by 11 votes to 7, resolved to decline Mr. Carnegie's offer of £5,000 for a public library.

LIBRARY PUBLICATIONS.

BOOTLE gives evidence of being "very much alive." Before us we have a list of works on that already well-nigh threadbare question, the Fiscal Policy, by Mr. C. K. Hunt and Mr. W. T. Montgomery, also a list of free lectures at the Marsh Lane Branch on various entertaining subjects, in connection with which we notice that "children under 16 years of age, unless in charge of an adult, will not be admitted." But do "children" nowadays consider themselves "children" at 16 years of age? We trow not. Perhaps, however, the "children" of Bootle are not so precocious (dare we say aggressive?) as elsewhere. We also note a programme of lectures with brief reading lists on each subject lectured on, delivered on Mondays at the Bootle Town Hall. The "Journal" for September also contains interesting chatty comments on current literature, a list of additions to both lending and reference libraries and some interesting articles.

From MANCHESTER comes the Quarterly Record, with its familiar features. It has a capital annotated reading list by F. W. B. Haworth on Costume. To our mind the "Record" would be improved if the main Dewey headings were printed in bolder type, like those in the reading list. We note that Manchester is still a *Public Free Library*, although most municipal libraries have dropped the *Free* now. Manchester, however, we must admit, is privileged.

From CROYDON (land of "capitals," "abbreviations" and "foot-notes") we receive the Readers' Index for September-October and November-December, 1903. Both of these numbers maintain their usual standard of excellence. The reading lists on Astronomy, Business Books, and Indoor (Games) Books are all good. The November-December number has a list of coming Talks, principally on literary subjects, and both numbers contain tables of lending and reference library issues, which compare favourably with the same period of time last year. We notice one or two minor printers' errors, but these do not materially affect the general excellence of the "Index."

From PARIS we get the General Review of French Bibliography, dealing with current French literature. There are critical reviews of books dealing with such varied subjects as Geology, Biology, Sociology, Philosophy, Science, Literature, etc. H. G. S.

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION CLASSES.

We are informed that the Library Association is arranging for classes to be held for assistants in elementary French and German. The idea is for the younger members of the profession to obtain some knowledge of one or other of these languages before presenting themselves as students at the classes now in operation at the London School of Economics. A special class

will be provided at reduced fees and convenient hours on the understanding that at least twelve students will join. If any of our readers would like to avail themselves of this opportunity they are requested to communicate with Mr. H. D. Roberts, 44a Southwark Bridge Road, S.E., as soon as possible.

A Brief Account of the Principal Powers conferred upon Library Authorities, with the chief points of difference between the Colonies, the United States and the United Kingdom

By WILLIAM J. HARRIS.

It may be of some little interest to library assistants and others to know briefly in what respects the law affecting public libraries in this country differs from that of the Colonies and the United States. I have therefore put *in précis* the main points of difference.

ENGLAND.

The principal powers conferred upon Local Authorities by the various Library Acts differ from the majority of Acts, inasmuch as they are purely permissive, and are not, like the Education Act, compulsory. The powers conceded by the Acts are much in excess of the ability of the authorities to carry out (excepting in those towns which have been fortunate in securing special legislation for the increase of the library rate), owing to the limitation of the 1d. rate.

In England the powers vested in library authorities are briefly as follows:—Authority to purchase or hire land for the purposes of erecting a public library, museum, art gallery or school of science, and to furnish the same with all necessary fittings, books, newspapers, and materials for the various departments. They have also powers to appoint salaried officers and servants for administrative purposes, and to make rules and regulations, etc. They are also free to combine with other districts for these purposes and to borrow money (subject to the central authority). The Irish Act of 1877 also allows the library authority to provide schools of music. The library authority has power to grant the use of the lending library to persons not resident in the district, either gratuitously or by payment.

The Library Acts provide that the rate shall not exceed 1d. in the pound, excepting in those towns that have special Acts or provisions of special rate, and under this crippling condition little more can be done than provide libraries, and these only in a very inadequate manner.

COLONIES.

The legislation as affecting public libraries in our Colonies, although in most cases substantially the same as our own, for many of them have been modelled from the English Acts, differ in point of financial control and limitations. The various Governments of the Colonies make special grants of money annually to their libraries, and these grants are usually based upon the amount of the subscriptions raised by the library. Many of the Colonies have special Library Laws, as for instance, South Australia, which has a rate limit of 3d. in the pound by the Act of 1902. For the Utopian ideal of a Library Act we must go to Tasmania, which has no rate limit, but allows communities to tax themselves as they may think fit for the purposes of public libraries—a universal consummation devoutly to be wished.

UNITED STATES.

The enormous growth of public libraries in the United States is greatly owing to its munificent benefactors, and to the liberal basis upon which the library rate is levied, which in the aggregate usually produces at least three times, and often more, than would be received under the English Acts.

There are three principal points of difference between the powers conferred upon library authorities in the United States and those in this country, *i.e.*:

1. *Constitution of Library Authority.*
2. *Exemption from Taxation.*
3. *Library Rate.*

1. CONSTITUTION OF LIBRARY AUTHORITY.

The growth of Library Law in the United States may be divided under five heads: 1. The incorporation of Society Libraries. 2. District School Libraries. 3. Township Libraries. 4. State aid to town libraries (Massachusetts passed the first law in 1890). 5. Obligatory law (in New Hampshire a Bill was brought before its Assembly in 1893, making it obligatory "that each town shall assess annually taxes for the upkeep of its public libraries."). It is to be regretted that this did not become law. The law varies slightly in the different States as to the constitution of library authorities, but it generally provides for a Board of nine Directors, a body elected independently of the Mayor or Council, as well as of the Board of Education, and gives them full control of all library affairs. Many of the states have a Library Commission, which usually consists of five persons. The state commission is to foster the growth of public libraries, to give advice, etc., and has power to grant \$100 to any town adopting the Act.

2. EXEMPTION FROM TAXATION.

It was early recognised in America that libraries, being for the public good, should be exempt from taxation. In England libraries are not exempt, with but few exceptions, and this is a serious drain upon their income.

3. LIBRARY RATE.

The basis of taxation in the United States is very different from that in this country, and although the rate is limited, excepting in a few States, yet the scale upon which it is levied produces a much larger rate. Thus in New Jersey one third mill on the dollar is the fixed rate. This rate is levied, *not* on the assessment value of rent, but upon the full value, thus if a house was valued at £450 and rented at £38 per annum, it would be rated on its value, *i.e.*, £450, and not, as in English law, for about £30.

Another method of maintaining libraries is by means of fines collected from licences of various kinds.

The present condition of the fixed rate in this country is antagonistic to a much greater development of our public libraries, and necessarily curtails those Utopian ideals that all energetic and zealous librarians cherish for the betterment of public libraries, the advancement of learning and the education of the proletariat.

"BOOKSHOPS, LIMITED."

The first bookshop of this company was opened on 2nd November, at College Crescent, Swiss Cottage, Hampstead, N.W., and the occasion was marked by an excellent exhibition of artistic bookbindings. A good

start has thus been made, and the new company have every reason to congratulate themselves on the success of the exhibition.

The premises are admirably designed in the early eighteenth century style, and the white paint relieved by plain oak doors, with bronze fittings, combine in making a most attractive front. We understand that this is to be the model of all the company's shops—a more tasteful one could not have been chosen.

Other booksellers would do well to follow the new management in at least one particular: only such salesmen will be employed as know something beyond the mere exteriors of the books they sell.

At the side of each door hangs a bulletin of the latest publishers' announcements, and a speciality seems to be made of fine art books.

All are at present invited to turn over the books with the utmost liberty, but if one may judge by the manner in which new books are treated by borrowers from a Public Lending Library, it is probable that this invitation will soon have to be withdrawn; otherwise the prudent purchaser will be tempted to look through a book here and buy a fresh copy elsewhere.

The exhibition of books bound at "The Doves" bindery, under the direction of Mr. T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, is a most interesting one. Especially noteworthy was "The Life of Benvenuto Cellini," printed at the "Vale Press," and sumptuously bound in red Niger Morocco, with green inlay, by Messrs. Sangorski and Sutcliffe.

The art of Mr. Douglas Cockerell is at its best in an exquisitely tasteful volume of Goldsmith's and Parnell's poems, plainly bound in crimson sealskin.

Till now we had imagined that the English binder "toiled panting after France in vain," but a visit to the "Bookshops, Limited," exhibition effectually dispelled this illusion. J.R.

SIXTH ANNUAL DINNER.

On the 18th November, at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, was held the Sixth Annual Dinner of the Association. Mr. Evan G. Rees, Chairman of the Association, presided, and was supported by the Officers and Messrs. Bond, Courtney, Fortune, Moon, F. M. Roberts and others.

The loyal toast having been duly honoured, Mr. W. Geo. Chambers proposed the Toast of "Our Provincial and Colonial Colleagues." He referred to the good works now being done by the N.W. Branch, which has over 70 members. Efforts had been made to establish branches in other districts, but so far without avail. This he regretted, as the future usefulness of the L.A.A. lay largely in that direction, but provincial apathy had to be overcome, and the difficulty was sometimes disheartening. Continuing, Mr. Chambers referred to a number of prominent London members of the L.A.A. who were now either in the Provinces or the Colonies. Notably Mr. Burt, Librarian of Handsworth, Mr. Soper, Librarian of Exeter, Mr. Lewin, who had recently arrived at Port Elizabeth, and Messrs. Dyer & Brown at Kimberley. Concluding, he wished continued prosperity to the N.W. Branch, and hoped that the bond of good fellowship between London and the Provinces would be strengthened. The toast was accorded musical honours.

Mr. W. J. Harris (Hornsey) briefly replied, emphasizing the need for more branches, and pointing out that by increasing the size and value to members of the "Library Assistant," more provincial recruits might be obtained.

Mr. E. A. Savage (Croydon) proposed "Our Visitors." He was sorry to be unable to report very great progress during the six years of the Association's existence. There were only about 300 members out of a possible 2,000. He hoped during the next six years this would be trebled. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. W. W. Fortune (Library Supply Co.) replied. He did not agree with Mr. Savage that the Association had not made much progress. He thought excellent progress had been made, and that great credit was due for the way the affairs of the Association had been managed. Although sorry to see so few librarians present, he thought it shewed the Association was now more dependent on its own efforts than heretofore, and he rejoiced to see it. He referred to the fact that very few of the original members of the Association were left, but great changes had taken place since 1895. He regretted being unable to do more for the Association. The provision of classes in Library Economy had been largely due to the efforts of the L.A.A. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Henry Bond (Woolwich) proposed the toast of the evening, "The L.A.A.," in a speech which was largely facetious. The disappointment of his life, he said, was that he had never been able to join the L.A.A., and in this connection made a number of happy remarks, more or less complimentary to the L.A.A., which were much appreciated. After much pleasantry Mr. Bond was more serious, and in closing his speech said, "I also admire you for the tenacity of purpose which characterises your attempts to close, lock, bolt, bar and barricade the 'open door.' But on this question, I fear, had I been a member of your Association, I would most have differed with what I understand is the opinion of the majority of your members. Though I have tried to look at this subject as an Assistant, and without prejudice, I cannot honestly bring myself to believe that the concern of many of you about the 'Open door' is a very necessary or very noble concern. The 'open door' is largely a bogey, and protecting yourselves against an imaginary evil is not the finest thing to engage your attention—there are higher aspirations than that. To be mainly a trade-union is a low ideal to set up. Let us aim for the highest good, not of ourselves, but of the community. Let us give the best service we can to the public, from wheresoever that best may come. We must not keep shut the door to protect our poorer selves if the open door will bring into the profession more worthy librarians.

But you have no need to claim the monopoly of an examination: it not only robs you of a desirable incentive, but with training behind you, there is nothing to fear from outside competition. What little shadow of it has already appeared above the horizon is only a healthy sign which should fire you to higher effort. So far as your interests do not conflict with the permanent interests of the profession generally, and of the community whom we serve, the L.A. is with you. I ask you, gentlemen, to drink to the continued activity, prosperity, and vigour of the L.A.A.

The Chairman in reply thanked Mr. Bond for the interest he has shown in the Association, and the kindly manner in which he had proposed the toast.

The health of the Chairman was proposed by the Vice-Chairman (Mr. S. A. Hatcher). Mr. Rees replied, thanking those present for the way in which they had received the toast. It was only after pressure that he had consented to be Chairman again this year. He thought they needed a younger man. Anything he had done for them was because he had the interest of the Association very much at heart, but he had been assisted by

the Executive, who had all worked zealously. It was really the last time he would respond to this toast. He wished them prosperity and every success.

Other toasts to the Vice-Chair, to Mr. Roebuck for his excellent arrangements, and to the artistes followed.

During the evening songs were rendered by Messrs. Courtney, Coutts, Evans, Gamgee, Stevenson, Thorne and Wise. Mr. Bert Evans presided at the piano.

C. C.

THE COMMITTEE.

At a meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday, November 25th, Mr. Stevenson moved "that the Study Circle be resumed in the January 'Assistant.'" Matter referred to Education Committee to consider and report.

Publications Committee discussed the re-construction of the Journal, and several new suggestions were adopted.

Branches Committee will endeavour to found a Yorkshire Branch this month, with a centre in the Leeds district.

Entertainments Committee reported a successful Dinner, socially and financially.

Vacancies on Sub-Committees filled. Messrs. Bullen and McDouall elected to Publications Committee, and Mr. Coltman to the Entertainments Sub-Committee.

Matter for next Agenda to reach the Hon. Sec. by Dec. 16th.

NEW MEMBERS.

Senior.—Mr. W. H. PARKER (Woolwich); Mr. C. SNAILHAM (Bolton).

Junior.—Mr. J. W. LITTEN (Stoke Newington); Mr. F. G. WHITE (Brighton).

APPOINTMENTS.

FLETCHER (Mr. Geo.) Sub-Librarian, Ashton-under-Lyne, to be Chief Librarian. This promotion has been recommended by the Council owing to the election of Mr. Wade to the office of Director of Education for the Borough. The other vacancies will be filled by a promotion all round and the appointment of a new Junior.

NOTICES.

All matter for January Journal should be sent to the Hon. Editor before December 19th.

All other communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. G. E. Roebuck, PUBLIC LIBRARY, 236, CABLE STREET, E.